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A Testimony Concerning Solomon Lukens

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HELD IN
PHILADELPHIA.
CONCERNING
SOLOMON LUKENS.

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A TESTIMONY

OF THE

Monthly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia,
Concerning Solomon Lukens.

WE feel engaged to give forth a testimony concerning our dear deceased friend Solomon Lukens, who was an elder belonging to this Monthly Meeting; in order to commemorate his faithful walk as a servant of Christ in his day, a day of backsliding from the standard of truth, and of treading down the precious testimonies of our predecessors.

Solomon Lukens was the son of David and Sarah Lukens, of Horsham, Montgomery Co., Pennsylvania, members of our religious Society; and was born in the year 1795, and brought up among Friends. We have no account that he gave way to a pursuit of delusive pleasures in his youth more than many other young persons who have not fully given up their hearts to serve the Lord; but being of a prompt, active, and even somewhat impetuous disposition by nature, it is not unlikely that he may, in his early days, have shunned the cross and made work for the repentance to which he afterwards yielded. About the 15th or 16th year of his age, during a time of affliction and tenderness of mind, he was reached by the power of conviction, and, through submission to the divine visitation, experienced a great change, and became for the time to come a seriously concerned youth; and

growing in grace from stature to stature, he was favored in his more mature life to become an example to his fellow-members in an upright walk, consistent with his profession, and eventually, through continued humble watchfulness and obedience, “a pillar in the house of our God.”

Between the 25th and 30th years of his age, he was three times called upon to bear a public testimony against war, by being imprisoned for non-payment of militia fines; the first time being in 1820, for five months; the second in 1824, for thirty days; and the third time in 1825, for three days; all in the county jail at Norristown, Pennsylvania.

In the intermediate time he had felt concerned to accompany Daniel Williams in a religious visit to Friends west of the Ohio river, which occupied him five months; and after this to travel with Elizabeth Robson, from England, and her companion, Jane Bettle, of Philadelphia, through the settlements of Friends in Canada, Ohio, Indiana, and Western Pennsylvania; which occupied him a little over one year. After returning from this journey, on mentally reviewing the preservations and help they had experienced therein, he wrote as follows:—“Let the praise be ascribed to the great Preserver of his people and Author of all good; for I acknowledge that unto us belong only blushing and confusion of face. O Lord, be pleased to undertake for me; humble me with a sense of my nothingness and unworthiness, and, oh, be pleased to lead me in the way that I should go; that indeed, through thy effectual working in me, I may be enabled to live to thy praise while here, and experience the revelation of thy dear Son in me, and be prepared, when done with the trials of time, to join the angelic

choir in singing thy praise through the endless ages of eternity."

The next day after his third release from prison, he again left home, with the approbation of his friends, to accompany Elizabeth Robson, and her companion, Ruth Ely, through the meetings of Friends in the Southern States; and was absent with them between four and five months. They had many trying seasons to pass through, from the sorrowful inroads of the spirit of unbelief in many places assuming control, and endeavoring to obstruct the promulgation of sound Christian doctrine.

In the year 1826 he accompanied E. Robson again into Virginia, and through Abington Quarterly Meeting in Pennsylvania, and to the Yearly Meetings of New York and New England.

After his return home from these journeys, he engaged in outward business for some years, and in 1845 married Susan Wilson, of Whitemarsh, in Montgomery county.

From the beginning of the 10th month, 1849, till about the middle of the 6th month, 1852, he, with his wife, was engaged, under a sense of religious duty, as superintendent of the concerns of the Committee of the meeting for sufferings of Philadelphia for the civilization of the Indians, on the reservation at and near Tunessassah, in the State of New York. He ever afterwards retained a warm interest in the comfort and welfare of these long oppressed aborigines of our land.

On returning to their home in Chester county, Penna., and for a number of years afterwards, Solomon Lukens had to bear a share of the burdens and trials which were brought on faithful Friends, through the

prevalency of a spirit engaged in modifying the ancient principles and practices of the Society in a way opposite to that which he had, some years before, had to contend with, while travelling with E. Robson, and for some time afterwards. But he was enabled to stand faithful and clear against all these changes, giving way neither to the right hand nor to the left; that, so far as in him lay, the truth of the gospel might remain unrepurchased.

Though of a cheerful, buoyant disposition, he was one of the mourners in Zion over the desolations which abound; and we believe his secret sighs and silent tears were regarded by the Lord as the acceptable sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Being a firm believer in the ancient doctrines of the gospel as revived and held by the primitive Friends, he stood faithfully against the errors propagated by J. J. Gurney as well as those former ones of Elias Hicks, though much trial and affliction were his lot therein. He frequently said, of latter time, that he felt well satisfied and comfortable in having endeavored to bear a faithful and practical testimony against both these defections; nevertheless he was often heard to say, "I am very poor and weak," and was deeply sensible of his unworthiness of the Lord's mercies.

He had many and deep trials to undergo for the Truth's sake, and also from the giving way of those who should have stood upright and valiant for the ancient faith; many of whom had been "armed, and carried bows" even against this most recent defection, but, having admitted a spirit of fear and of reasoning with flesh and blood, turned back in the day of battle, and came not up to the help of the Lord against those who were confederated in opposition to the Truth.

Thus, in the year 1860, he was one of the most decided among those Friends who became convinced that the time had come for them to stand aloof from all further complication with the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia in its conniving at this great apostasy. He accordingly united fully with them in their endeavor to sustain the Society on its ancient ground; the result of which was the establishment of the General Meeting of Friends for Pennsylvania, etc., in unity with other small bodies in different parts, and independent of the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia.

His constancy in testimony against the successive subtle contrivances of the enemy in his insidious attacks upon our ancient faith, and his animating example of a consistent life and conduct, united with an unremitting concern for the preservation of the life of Truth in the church, were many times instrumental to the encouragement of his friends in the afflictions which they had to pass through. He was often concerned in our meetings to utter short, lively, and pertinent exhortations, chiefly in the language of Holy Scripture, revived in the newness of life.

He often felt his mind engaged to recommend Friends to gather their families, at suitable times, for the important service of waiting in silence on the Lord, alluding to the benefit and comfort it had been to himself; and frequently, when visiting his friends, he was led to request those whom he was visiting to sit down in silence with him; and many times did these opportunities prove to be seasons of refreshing as from the presence of the Lord, cementing them in true Christian fellowship. At times he was led to say a few words in such opportunities, in a tender, weighty manner, to the comfort of his friends.

Very encouraging were his faithful dedication and diligence in attending religious meetings, often under outwardly discouraging circumstances.

He was an elder of whom it may be truly said, by some who experienced his fatherly care in days gone by, that it was his concern to cherish the good in all, and to encourage those who felt poor and weak to seek for best help; and often was he enabled to hold up the drooping hands of some of his fellow travellers Zionward.

His wife deceased about the end of the year 1872, he surviving her three years and five months. Though deeply sensible of his loss, his calm submission to the divine will in this afflictive dispensation was exemplary.

He travelled much also in the latter part of his life, in the service of Truth, either as companion to friends in the ministry, or on his own feelings of brotherly love and religious concern, and with the unity of his friends; not sparing himself when duty called him forth, even when fourscore years of age.

In the summer of 1875 he was liberated by this Monthly Meeting to attend the Yearly Meetings of New York and New England. His services on this occasion, especially at Poplar Ridge, were particularly lively and to the comfort and edification of Friends there. His last extensive journey was in the autumn of the same year, when he accompanied a friend in the ministry to visit friends in Indiana, Ohio, etc. He appeared to be, to the last, anxious to fill up his measure of service for the church's sake.

He attended our Monthly Meeting as usual about two weeks before his decease, appearing then to be in good health; and his company and the brightness and serenity of his spirit were even more than usually felt,

by some of us who were with him, as cause for humble thankfulness and encouragement. He attended his own meeting at Ercildouu, after this, in due course; the last time being three days before his death, and under some bodily weakness; of which occasion he remarked in his diary, which he kept up to the last day of his life, that he "was favored with a comfortable meeting." But on the morning of the 31st of Fifth month, 1876, he was suddenly seized with pain and difficulty of breathing, which rapidly increased, and his spirit passed peacefully away about eleven o'clock in the evening of the same day. He had completed his 81st year, except about two weeks.

May it please the Lord of the harvest, in his tender love and mercy, to raise up other faithful laborers to stand for his precious cause.

Signed by direction and on behalf of the meeting,

CHARLES ALBERTSON, CLERK.

Read and approved in our General Meeting of Friends for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, etc., held in Philadelphia by adjournments on the 6th and 7th days of the 3d month, 1877, and directed to be printed.

WM. WARING, CLERK.





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A testimony of the monthly meeting

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